UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/25008*
24 December 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 22 DECEMBER 1992 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In my letter of 16 November I informed you of the need I felt to postpone the presentation of my report on the situation concerning Western Sahara until the second week of December 1992 in order to await the results of the consultative meeting of tribal chiefs of Western Sahara which was to be held in Geneva early this month. I regret to inform you that it was not possible to hold the consultative meeting due to discrepancies regarding the notion of tribal chiefs. These discrepancies are themselves linked to the persisting divergences on the criteria for identification and their interpretation.

It had been my hope that the referendum in Western Sahara could be organized on the basis of agreements among all concerned on the major aspects of the settlement plan. The long and patient efforts of my Special Representative over the past several months have been undertaken with a view to reaching such agreements, particularly on the criteria for the identification of voters and the related instructions laid down and clearly articulated by my predecessor in his report S/23299 of 19 December 1991. I must conclude with much regret, however, that these efforts have not achieved the desired results.

Notwithstanding the continuing absence of the agreements sought and in order not to lose more time, I now feel obliged to take concrete steps towards the holding of the referendum, in the expectation that both parties will fully cooperate with me in pursuance of their commitment to abide by the provisions of the settlement plan. In my forthcoming report which I will submit to the Security Council in the second half of January 1993, I intend therefore to set forth the various steps which will need to be taken in order to hold the referendum at the earliest possible date.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

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* Reissued for technical reasons.

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